Strategy Research Project

ESTABLISHING A MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

BY

COLONEL IVAR S. TAIT
United States Army

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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Dr. W. Andrew Terrill
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This paper presents a case for establishing a Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation (MEISC) in the United States. Moreover, it advocates the creation of an education and training program that develops a professional, military and law enforcement, noncommissioned officer corps for U.S. allies in the Middle East. Current security assistance activities, which focus on equipment sales and training, fail to develop Gulf Arab states' real military and security capacity. These activities do not address the root causes of their continued poor performance – the lack of an educated, professional noncommissioned officer corps. Establishing the Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation would help diminish the causal mechanisms that perpetuate the tendency for Arab militaries to underperform and resist full transformation. MEISC will expand the academic and professional training level of the Arab noncommissioned officer corps, thereby facilitating its transformation and the building of real partnership capacity for U.S. allies in the Middle East. Real change to the status quo requires a new paradigm for security assistance in the Middle East; the Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation can provide that change.

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ESTABLISHING A MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

by

Colonel Ivar S. Tait
United States Army

Dr. W. Andrew Terrill
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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This paper presents a case for establishing a Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation (MEISC) in the United States. Moreover, it advocates the creation of an education and training program that develops a professional, military and law enforcement, noncommissioned officer corps for U.S. allies in the Middle East. Current security assistance activities, which focus on equipment sales and training, fail to develop Gulf Arab states' real military and security capacity. These activities do not address the root causes of their continued poor performance – the lack of an educated, professional noncommissioned officer corps. Establishing the Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation would help diminish the causal mechanisms that perpetuate the tendency for Arab militaries to underperform and resist full transformation. MEISC will expand the academic and professional training level of the Arab noncommissioned officer corps, thereby facilitating its transformation and the building of real partnership capacity for U.S. allies in the Middle East. Real change to the status quo requires a new paradigm for security assistance in the Middle East; the Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation can provide that change.

ESTABLISHING A MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

> Despite the huge military expenditures and sophisticated Western armaments in their inventories, the Arab Gulf states are ill prepared to defend themselves . . .
>
> —Richard L. Russell[1]

This statement is indicative of the shortcomings in U.S. security assistance strategy in the Middle East. Despite nearly 40 years of U.S. military assistance, Saudi Arabia, a key Gulf Arab ally, still lacks the military capability to effectively deter, contain, or defend itself from an emerging Iranian threat in the region. Now, as much as ever, the Gulf Arab states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar are dependent on the United States for their defense. Moreover, the extent of the United States' military commitment in Iraq and Afghanistan has done little to allay the security concerns of Gulf Arab leaders. They sense that the United States is unable to deter or influence an Iran bent on supporting instability throughout the region and developing its own nuclear weapons.

Despite massive spending on high-end military equipment, the Gulf Arab states are severely lacking in military capability. They are, as Professor of National Security Affairs Richard L. Russell puts it so succinctly, "long on hardware, short on power."[2] This stems from a persistent gap between the quality and sophistication of their military hardware and the quality and sophistication of their personnel in terms of the technical skill required to utilize the full capabilities of this equipment. Since Gulf Arab militaries do not have a professional noncommissioned officer corps, much of the qualitative advantages they have in military equipment in negated. Moreover, the U.S. approach to security assistance has not been focused on developing a noncommissioned officer

corps nor has it been successful in addressing the root causes of this deficiency. Real change in the status quo requires a new security assistance paradigm for the Middle East. This paper presents a case for establishing a Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation and an education program aimed at developing a professional noncommissioned officer corps in the Arab Gulf.

Issue

Current security assistance activities, which focus on equipment sales and training, fail to develop Gulf Arab states' real military and security capacity. The purpose of this paper is to: 1) examine our current security assistance approach in the Gulf region, 2) analyze why it has failed to achieve some of the desired ends, and 3) provide a set of recommendations that will bring the means and ways more in line with these desired ends. The paper also contends that a successful U.S. security assistance strategy must address the underdevelopment of the noncommissioned officer corps, an issue that continues to plague all Gulf Arab states. Recent events have created a window of opportunity to do just that.

Rising concern about Iran, and a realization that Arab societies must transform, provide a compelling case for the development of professional military and law enforcement institutions in the Gulf Arabs states. The current political, economic, and social conditions are ideal for pushing forward with the development of a professional Arab noncommissioned officer corps.

Framing the Environment

U.S. interests in the region have not changed since the demise of the former U.S. policy of Dual Containment for Iran and Iraq.[3] These interests are: 1) reliable access to oil – this implies stability and security in the region and reassurance to our allies and

adversaries that we are committed to both, 2) curbing nuclear weapons proliferation, 3) limiting terrorism, and 4) protecting Israel.[4] Iran poses the greatest challenge to these interests.

U.S. strategy to protect these interests must account for Iran's strategic vision and objectives. Imbued with a deep sense of mistrust, Iran's world view is shaped by a history of outside influence and imperial design. It is in this context that Iran seeks to form a rejectionist coalition of allies (Syria and Venezuela) and surrogates (Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq), to counter Western influence and to challenge moderate Arab supremacy in the region. Iran's ambition harbors the manifestation of its desire to be a regional hegemon.

The 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) is clear about the threat posed by Iran stating that, "We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran . . ."[5] The U.S. strategy toward Iran has been to block the threats of the regime in what continues to be a policy of containment; however, in 2009 the Iranian regime expanded its nuclear program and its support to destabilizing actors in the region suggesting that containment works only when there is a credible deterrent. With the U.S. heavily engaged in commitments around the globe, it is imperative the Gulf Arab states have a credible military deterrent, including a maritime and missile defense capability, and a credible police force. U.S. security assistance can, and should, be leveraged to do more to develop the military capabilities of our Gulf Arab allies.

U.S. Security Assistance - Aims & Shortcomings

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, "Security cooperation activities include bilateral and multilateral training and exercises, foreign military sales (FMS) and financing (FMF), officer exchange programs, educational opportunities at professional

military schools, technical exchanges, and efforts to assist foreign security forces in building competency and capacity."[6] Security assistance is an important aspect of these activities. Security assistance activities are executed through a group of programs supervised by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA).These programs, authorized by law, support U.S. national security objectives and include: delivery of defense weapons systems to foreign governments; U.S. service schools training international students; and U.S. personnel advising friendly governments on ways to improve their internal defense capabilities.[7] For the countries of the Arabian Gulf, this is done primarily through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program and the International Military Education Training program (IMET).

Security cooperation and security assistance are an important component of U.S. policy and strategy. In the March 2006 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), security assistance is characterized as a means of promoting effective democracies and democratic reform. The NSS explicitly recommends, "Tailoring assistance and training of military forces to support civilian control of the military and military respect for human rights in a democratic society, as a means of National Power to accomplish the goal of advancing freedom."[8] For the Middle East, promoting civilian control of the military and military respect for human rights are important and worthy goals; promoting democracy is more problematic. Promoting democracy is likely to produce greater instability in the Arab Gulf and in the global energy markets. Promoting "good governance" is the real issue, and development of a professional military and security institution is an important component of good governance.

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) is more pragmatic in its approach to security assistance. It concludes that in order to succeed in meeting the current and future challenges of the complex strategic environment, the U.S. military will require support from its allies and partners.[9] In emphasizing the need to strengthen and expand alliances and partnerships by improving their capabilities, the NDS acknowledges that training and education are "key" to building partner capability.[10] The National Military Strategy (NMS) also links security assistance to promoting security. It views security assistance activities as not only developing, modernizing, and transforming the capabilities of our partners, but also as helping to "dissuade" adversaries from taking action that threatens stability and security.[11] However, despite the efforts of one of the largest security assistance activities in the U.S. Department of Defense, the Gulf Arabs remain woefully dependent on the United States to dissuade Iran from undertaking such actions that threaten security in the region.

The newly published 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review devotes an entire section to reforming security assistance. It recognizes the fact that U.S. security is "inextricably tied to the effectiveness of our efforts to help partners and allies build their own security capacity."[12] In fact, the QDR emphasizes the importance of developing partner security forces and directs U.S. forces to "treat the building of partners' security capacity as an increasingly important mission." However, the QDR's approach to reforming security assistance emphasizes improving the process of providing equipment (selling or giving) and training. While this reform is important and certainly long overdue, it is essentially a continuation of current policy and will produce the same results. The development of a professional military will require more than good

equipment and training. Education and development of analytical problem solving skills are essential. For that reason, the U.S. military has established education standards for its enlisted and noncommissioned officers.

Furthermore, the QDR's advice for reforming security assistance is aimed at winning the current wars. For example, it mentions the need to improve U.S. doctrine, education, and training for U.S. service personnel engaged in security sector assistance. The QDR further highlights the need to make changes to the "personnel, organizations, and processes to develop and track qualified [U.S.] personnel for capacity building activities, and develop critical enablers such as language, regional, and cultural skills."[13] While these are important reforms, and certainly relevant in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are short-term measures. A more long-term approach must address the education level of the forces we aim to reform.

This is not the first time countries of the Middle East have had foreign training or advisers. Training and advising only go so far. A more long-term view would address education of the military and law enforcement community as the basis for "shaping" real capability and long-term stability, security, and self-sufficiency. Our security assistance experience in Saudi Arabia should be a lesson in the value of periodically "reframing" our strategic approach to military capacity building and security assistance activities. Ideally, this is done during phase zero of the Theatre Security Cooperation Plan.

Phase zero shaping activities are an important component of capacity building and strategic deterrence in the Arab Gulf. Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee in April 2009, General Petraeus acknowledged the importance of the Gulf Arab countries to U.S. interests and their role as "key" U.S. partners. Not only are they

major suppliers of the world's energy resources, but they "collectively wield defense forces far larger than any of their neighbors." [14]

Phase zero security assistance activities play a major role in shaping and protecting our security interests on the Arabian Peninsula. As General Petraeus stated in his remarks to the Committee, "We help develop indigenous capabilities for counterterrorism; border, maritime, and critical infrastructure security; and deterring Iranian aggression. As part of this, our FMS and FMF programs are helping to improve the capabilities and interoperability of our partners' forces." [15] However, the focus of these programs is on equipment and interoperability. What is noticeably lacking is an emphasis on professional development of the noncommissioned officer and technical training for the enlisted. While professional development is done through programs such as IMET and FMS training cases, these programs mainly target the officers.

In a 2004 speech delivered by then Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Douglas J. Feith on the transformation of security cooperation, he emphasized the need for capacity building of our partners. As he noted, "we want them to have the capability and willingness to take on missions that serve our common interests."[16] In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States Military Training Mission (USMTM), U.S. Central Command's security assistance organization, has been training, advising, and equipping the Saudi Arabian armed forces since 1953. The Office of Program Management-Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG), also established in 1953, does the same thing for the Saudi Arabian National Guard. With over one hundred U.S. military members in country, most of whom are military advisors, USMTM and OPM-SANG make up the largest Security Assistance Organization program within the

Department of Defense. Following the 1991 Gulf War, their efforts were mainly focused on managing over $60 billion in U.S. equipment sales. In 1997, the emphasis shifted from "the transfer of technology to the transfer of technological know-how," as Saudi defense spending declined. Since 2001, USMTM's mission has been "to advise and assist the Saudi Arabian armed forces through security cooperation efforts in developing, training, and sustaining capable deterrent and self-defense forces for Saudi Arabia in order to facilitate regional security."[17]

Without a doubt, U.S. security assistance in the Middle East remains of strategic importance. The question is, has it succeeded in helping the Saudi Arabian armed forces create a capable deterrent and self-defense force? In May 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates praised the "capacity-building" efforts of the U.S. Military Training Mission (USMTM) and the Office of Program Management, Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG) in Saudi Arabia. According to Secretary Gates, "the Saudi armed forces have become a more professional and effective organization due to the work of the U.S. military training mission."[18] He added that "The United States seeks to rely on the capabilities of our partners rather than direct U.S. military action to deal with the diverse array of security challenges."[19] Secretary Gates also publically recognized the establishment of a new U.S. security assistance organization in Saudi Arabia. This organization will work with the Ministry of Interior to train and equip a new 35,000-man security force, the Office of Program Management, Facility Security Force (OPM–FSF) whose mission will be to protect the Kingdom's critical oil, water, and electric infrastructure. It is clear that the senior U.S. leadership sees the need for greater self-

reliance from our Middle East allies in the security arena. The reality is, our Gulf allies are still not prepared to take on this responsibility.

Anthony Cordesman, renowned security analyst and consultant, has analyzed Gulf Arab militaries extensively and concludes that the Gulf Arab states have indeed purchased large quantities of equipment and advanced technology over the last decade. In fact, he argues that there has been too much emphasis on the purchase of high-tech military hardware and too little emphasis on developing the personnel to effectively use the equipment. As a result, the Gulf Arabs have "less national and collective military capability than their force strengths and vast investments in arms imports would otherwise imply."[20]

Greater emphasis should be placed on manpower quality. There simply are not enough competent technicians and noncommissioned officers to give these countries an effective war-fighting or critical infrastructure protection capability. The lack of political and military leadership, technical proficiency, manpower, sustainment, and maintenance remains a significant obstacle to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab militaries. These countries must therefore rely heavily on foreigners for technical expertise and maintenance services. An initiative of these governments to wean their militaries off foreign contractor service support with policies aimed at developing an indigenous capability, known as, *Saudization*, Bahrainization etc., sent many foreign service companies packing. The initiative has not had the desired effect; equipment readiness has plummeted in the units. The fact of the matter is, without a professional noncommissioned officer corps, our security assistance efforts simply do not translate into greater capability.

Framing the Problem

Why, despite massive spending and significant U.S. security assistance, has there been such little progress in the development of a capable military and security force in the Arab Gulf? Richard Russell is not exaggerating when he says, “The reasons for the inability of the Arab Gulf states to field effective militaries are wide, deep, numerous, and elude any quick fix.”[21] Certainly this explains the reluctance of the U.S. military to tackle this problem; it may have been simply “too hard”, or perhaps even unfeasible. So why has the creation of a professional military been so difficult? Without a doubt, the internal politics of these countries is a main reason.

Relatively sure they have unwavering U.S. protection from external threats, Gulf Arab rulers are more worried about internal threats. Additionally, the regimes latent fear of a military coup d’état creates an aversion to an effective military. Political decisions affecting the military always seem to harbor this factor in the equation. Loyalty and tribal affiliation, for example, are often more important considerations for promotion and assignment than merit. Despite U.S. military advisors’ best efforts, “Jointness” remains hampered in practice by prevailing organizational stovepipes and structural inefficiencies designed to prevent a military coup.

The fear of a military coup also effects command and control. The hierarchical structure of the military is so centralized that virtually all decisions are made at the general officer level or higher; the noncommissioned officers have virtually no leadership role. Since the military is ostensibly a source of regime protection, it acts not only as the outer ring of the highly layered security apparatus, but also acts as a counter-balance to the other security services, such as the Royal Guard, the National Guard, and the Ministry of Interior.

A second reason the creation of a professional military has been so difficult is due to social conditions. To a certain extent, the military is not seen as a profession. The military employs a large number of unskilled members of society that would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed. This helps reduce a potential element of threat to the regime. Since the military lacks a professional culture, the work ethic is weak. The military is seen as a good source of income and benefits, with very little work expected in return.

The third, and arguably most significant, reason the creation of a professional military has been so difficult stems from the education system. While the education level within the officer corps has improved significantly over the past several decades, with many officers attending Western universities and military service schools, the education level of the noncommissioned officers and enlisted soldiers remains generally quite dismal. As Richard L. Russell aptly notes, “Their education systems do not produce technically oriented men willing or able to do grunt work on which effective military organizations depend.”[22] This is very evident when you look at who is operating and maintaining the more sophisticated weapon systems; these systems are mostly maintained by foreign, civilian contractors.

The fourth reason the creation of a professional military has been so difficult, is Arab culture, which is inextricably linked to education. Arab culture is often viewed as the culprit for poor performance of Arab militaries in the modern era. In fact, Arab culture theory provides a useful insight into understanding the source of this problem. In *Arab Culture and Arab Military Performance: Tracing the Transmission Mechanisms*, Kenneth Pollack examines the causal mechanism by which particular traits of Arab

culture are transmitted, thereby perpetuating the tendency for Arab militaries to under-perform in traditional, maneuver warfare.[23] The traits he identifies as dominant in Arab culture are not only insightful but essential to understanding the problem:

> Arab culture tends to promote conformity with group norms over innovation and independent thinking.
>
> Arab culture tends to promote a rather severe deference to authority which discourages initiative among subordinates.
>
> Arab culture tends to promote the avoidance of shame at all costs which discourages an individual from accepting responsibility and encourages the manipulation of information to conceal shameful acts.
>
> Arab culture tends to promote a fierce loyalty to the group which encourages individuals to shield friends and relatives from shame and reinforces emphasis on conformity.
>
> Arab culture tends to consider manual labor to be shameful, and considers technical and scientific work as a form of manual labor.[24]

Pollock argues that these traits were the underpinnings of poor performance for Arab militaries in combat from 1948 – 1991. He contends that these traits contribute to four pervasive problems in the military: poor tactical leadership, poor information management, poor weapons handling, and poor maintenance.[25] Any Westerner who has worked with local military forces in the Middle East will certainly be familiar with these traits and understand the challenges and frustrations they present. Thus, despite many cases where Arab armies had superior numbers and equipment, "The lack of initiative, improvisation, adaptability, flexibility, independent judgment, willingness to maneuver and ability to integrate the various combat arms effectively meant that Arab armies and air forces were regularly outfought by their adversaries."[26]

Since culture is learned behavior, these traits are taught, formally and informally, from birth by parents, teachers, friends, and relatives. For soldiers, these traits are then

reinforced and perpetuated through the military training and education system. Pollack concludes that "over the centuries, Arab culture developed a method of teaching which inculcated the values of the dominant culture."[27] Not only has this led to the creation of a society of men and women unprepared for the economic and cultural transformation of the 21st century, it has produced soldiers ill-suited for modern warfare.

Norvell de Atkine, a Middle East specialist and U.S. Army Colonel (Retired), similarly looked at why Arab armies lose wars and concluded that culture, along with certain societal attributes, are the main reasons for the poor performance.[28] He identifies the education system, control of information, and the social gap between officers and enlisted as inhibitors of an effective military.[29] In societies where information and education have been relatively limited, information is power. In the military, controlling information can make up for a lack of knowledge or expertise. Hence, officers will keep information from subordinates to protect their status. In addition, the education system places emphasis on rote memorization. Thus, critical thinking and analysis are not considered attributes. Application of the data to problem solving is not developed. There is no question that the problem – lack of military capability – is deeply rooted in prevailing societal and cultural norms, yet in order to attain the stated policy ends, Phase zero security assistance shaping activities must address these causal mechanisms even though they appear daunting.

Reframing the Approach

A new approach is needed to meet the goal of U.S. security assistance in the Arab Gulf. The stated goals of U.S. security assistance are to: promote self-sufficiency; support enhanced relations between the United States and allies; and expand foreign understanding of the United States and its culture and values.[30] To achieve these

goals, more must be done to *promote self-sufficiency* and to *foster a better understanding of the United States*. The current U.S. approach is too focused on equipment sales and senior leader training. Greater investment must be made on actual capability enablers: people and core competencies. To do this, the U.S. must expand the ways and means of our security assistance program in the Middle East to include the development of a professional noncommissioned officer corps for the military and the law enforcement community. The strategic context – global trends and regional events – has created a window of opportunity for "reframing" the U.S. approach to security assistance in the Middle East.

Recommendation

This paper recommends enhancing U.S. security assistance strategy in the Middle East by establishing a Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation located in the United States. The Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation (MEISC) would function similar to that of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC), formerly called the School of Americas, which has operated at Fort Benning, Georgia since 1984.[31] The mission of MEISC would be tailored to meet the specific needs and cultural aspects of the region. It would focus on the education and training of military and law enforcement officials primarily within the enlisted and noncommissioned officer ranks.

The Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation (WHISC) is a Department of Defense institution with the Secretary of the Army as its executive agent. It was established in January 2001 by the National Defense Authorization Act. WHISC is a part of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) along with the Combined Arms Center as its immediate Headquarters. "The mission of the WHISC is to provide

professional training to military, civilian, and law enforcement personnel from eligible nations within the Western Hemisphere, while supporting the democratic principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States."[32] The Army considers it a model security cooperation program that "helps to anchor U.S. and Latin-American relationships . . . and builds partnership capacity."[33] In addition to promoting democratic values and respect for human rights, the DoD Directive includes the promotion of knowledge and *"understanding of United States customs and tradition*"[34] (author's italics). The institution graduates nearly 1,000 students per year.

The establishment and sustainment of WHISC supports the logic behind establishing a similar academic institution for the Middle East, albeit appropriately tailored to meet cultural and political aspects that would insure its feasibility and acceptability. The charter should promote good governance vice democratic principles. MEISC would emphasize civilian control over the military and law enforcement agencies, respect for human rights, adherence to the rule of law, and leadership. These principles would provide the foundation on which the noncommissioned officer corps profession would be formed. Education, training, and international exposure would develop the core competencies required to create the Profession and a capable force able to confront the challenges of the 21st century.

Education and professional military training for noncommissioned officers in the Middle East would be the task and purpose of the Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation (MEISC). How would MEISC do this? MEISC would do this somewhat differently than that of the WHISC. This paper recommends the program begin by identifying promising, bright, motivated enlisted Arab soldiers from the military, law

enforcement community, and maritime services. They would undertake a two-year program of study at a Western affiliated university or college in their country, where they would earn an Associate's Degree. Since Arabs have a close association with their extended family members, doing this portion of the education in-country would limit the time Arab students would be away from their families. Also, instruction would be primarily in Arabic, with English language courses making up a number of electives. This would help achieve a higher percentage of students attaining a score of 85 or better on the English language proficiency test. The reason this can be done today is that many Western universities and colleges have established branches in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and others.[35] This basic two-year academic program would be funded by the host country in most cases.

Upon graduation, these enlisted soldiers would have a higher level of education, better technical and automation skills, and a foundation for more open and analytical problem solving. Those who excel by demonstrating academic and leadership potential, and English language proficiency, would be selected to attend a number of programs at the Middle East Institute of Security Cooperation. A recommended location for the MEISC would be in the vicinity of Tampa, Florida due to the ideal weather, cultural sites, and proximity to U.S. Central Command Headquarters. These programs would run anywhere from six months to one year in length. Families would be encouraged to accompany the students and should be fully supported throughout their stay. Their participation would be considered an important part of the program. Arab families meeting American families and having their children going to an American school would

have a multiplying effect toward changing perceptions and stereotypes of Americans and Arabs.

Some of the suggested programs offered at MEISC would include the Primary NCO Course (PNCOC); Advanced NCO Course (ANOC); Basic and Advanced Law Enforcement Course; and Basic and Advanced Maritime Security Course; Basic and Advanced Critical Infrastructure Course. What would completion of MEISC accomplish? It would further educate and enlighten a section of Arab society that has been relatively isolated from the outside world and modernity. It would add the professional leadership and technical skills to the academic knowledge they achieve at a civilian institution, thereby promoting the development of a professional noncommissioned officer corps. It would raise the level of cultural awareness through their social interaction with Americans while living in the United States. Over time, this will go a long way toward developing a better, more accurate perception of the United States with a strata of Arab society that has been susceptible to extremist ideology and propaganda aimed at inciting hatred and recruitment into extremist organizations.

Why would the Arab leader buy into this program? The likelihood of Arab leadership buy-in and support for the MEISC is good. Saudi Arabia's support would undoubtedly be the key to its success. Fortunately, King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz's support may be easy to obtain considering the strategic decision he made to transform his Kingdom through education reform and promotion. In 2004, the King allocated over $15 billion to higher education and the opening of more than 100 new colleges and universities.[36] More recently, the ban on private institutions was lifted and many Western universities are partnering with Saudi universities to provide teachers, the curriculum

and a degree.[37] The idea is that the new curriculum will change the over-emphasis on religious studies and traditional Arab teaching methods of rote memorization, thereby providing greater emphasis on Western academic endeavors in problem-solving and critical-thinking.

Recognizing that his Kingdom must advance into the 21st century for its own survival, but not faster than society can tolerate to avoid the fate of Iran in 1979, King Abdullah is investing heavily in higher education. The King's effort to reform the higher education system in Saudi Arabia is linked to his program to create high salaried jobs for Saudis with the building of six regional economic centers. The strategy is to diversify the oil based economy and create a new, competitively skilled class of educated and technically proficient Saudis. The desired secondary effect of this is to reduce the influence of the *Wahabi* clerics on Saudi society and policy. This would then pave the way for other reforms. King Abdullah allocated massive amounts of funding to get these educational programs underway. In 2009, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology was opened in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia. Designed to be a world class center for science and technology, it has coed classes staffed with Western professors and preeminent scientists, and a curriculum that is in English.[38] In addition, the number of fully funded scholarships for Saudis to study abroad is staggering.

Such programs will have a significant impact on the transformation of Saudi society over time. However, there is an opportunity to expand the scope of his education agenda by targeting those in Saudi society who do not have higher academic aspirations. The King may see the merits of a deeper transformation of Saudi society through controlled institutions like the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. By

selecting young soldiers and police men and women for two-year academic study at the university, MEISC would also support the newly created academic institutions in Saudi Arabia.

The rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries would be compelled to follow Saudi Arabia. Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain would likely support MEISC for similar reasons, although Bahrain may not have the financial resources to fund their program without the support of IMET. Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and even Afghanistan would potentially be able to participate and benefit greatly from such a program, although the attendance of non-Muslim or non-Sunni participants would raise significant issues that would have to be addressed.

What are the obstacles? Who attends would undoubtedly be contentious. The political and social issues would have to be negotiated beforehand. Sect and ethnicity would also be contentious; there would undoubtedly be resistance to Shi'a participation. Accepting Kurdish, Turkmen, Lebanese Druse or Maronite students, for example, while ideal from an academic standpoint, might be problematic. Which countries would and would not be invited is another issue.

Conceivably, Egyptians and Jordanians would not pose a problem for Saudi Arabia and Gulf Arab leaders. Certain students from Lebanon and Iraq would be more problematic. There will likely be little resistance to inviting students from the countries in the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) Area of Operations (AOR), such as Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco, even Nigeria. Realistically, the program should start out with primarily the GCC countries, and expand gradually to include more countries as the situation permits. Conceivably, a day could come when Muslim students from Central

Asia, Eastern Europe, and Indonesia would attend as well. Saudi Arabia's leadership could play an important role in overcoming these obstacles due to its influence throughout the greater Arab world.

Other considerable obstacles would have to be overcome. Israel, fearing a strong, competent Arab military, may lodge a vehement objection to the establishment of MEISC. This in-turn may raise substantial domestic opposition within the U.S. Congress and Senate, as well as from constituent supporters and lobby groups, like American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). However, in light of the current Iranian and Hizbollah threat to Israel, resistance to this idea may be less than otherwise expected.

Perhaps one of the most serious obstacles to the establishment of the MEISC is the omnipresent issue of funding. As the U.S. Department of Defense faces greater resource constraints and growing requirements, it will be difficult to find funding for the establishment of the Middle East Institute of Security Cooperation, an institution that will not provide instantaneous results. U.S. decision-makers will have to convince Congress that this is a long term investment that will pay big dividends ten or twenty years in the future. There is a possibility that King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz, seeing the virtue of this long term investment for his country and the region, may be willing to help with start up costs, or invest in the MEISC facility and mosque.

Conclusion

The emerging doctrine of "Design" methodology stresses the importance of "understanding the operational environment" and "understanding the problem." In practice, it requires "deep-thinking" in order to develop solutions that address the root causes of the problem, rather than the symptoms. This paper contends that U.S.

security assistance strategy does not address the root causes for the lack of military and security capability in the Gulf Arab states. The establishment of a Middle East Institute of Security Cooperation is the recommended approach to address this problem.

The U.S. political end state for the Arab Gulf is regional stability, continued access and flow of oil, and deterring Iranian aggression against our allies in the region. Although the burden of deterrence falls squarely on the United States, the goal is to shift some of this burden and strengthen those who are most vulnerable through an effective security assistance program that “shapes” the environment in favor of achieving that goal. Current U.S. security assistance provides our partners in the region with equipment and technology and training that supports greater interoperability; however, this assistance has not been effective in establishing a professional noncommissioned officer corps, arguably the backbone of any capable, professional military or security force.

The establishment of a Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation would address this problem by providing the ways and means to educate and train a professional noncommissioned officer corps. It would provide a pool of noncommissioned officers that would then be available to the advisory efforts of U.S. Security Assistance Organizations (USMTM, OPM-SANG, OPM-FSF) for training that would improve the indigenous capabilities of the host nation.

The Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation will address the “causal mechanisms” of Arab culture identified by Kenneth Pollack and the teaching methodology that perpetuates the tendency for Arab militaries to underperform and undermines their ability to develop a modern military. The Middle East Institute for

Security Cooperation program will expand the education of the enlisted ranks during the two-years they spend at a Western university in the Middle East and will initiate the development of a professional noncommissioned officer corps during the professional military or law enforcement training they receive at the Institute.

The timing of the establishment of this Institute and this program is opportune. Saudi and other Arab Gulf leaders have invested heavily in education reform. They have "reframed" their approach to solving the social, economic, and political problems they are confronted with by reforming the educational system at the university level. The Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation would support this effort by similarly reforming the education of those who will make up the professional noncommissioned officer corps. Real military and security force capability will require the U.S. Department of Defense to "reframe" its approach to security assistance. The establishment of a Middle East Institute for Security Cooperation provides the U.S. Department of Defense a viable (feasible, acceptable, sustainable) solution to what has been an enduring, complex problem.

Endnotes

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[2] Russell, "Future Gulf War," 35.

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[4] Author's note. Access to oil is deemed a vital national interest; the other three interests are deemed important to our national interests.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] *United States Army Security Assistance Portal*, https:usasa.army.mil/about/goals.htm (accessed October 26, 2009).

[31] Author's note. The U.S. Army School of Americas was a U.S. Army Center that trained soldiers and police, primarily from Latin America, in counterinsurgency and combat related skills. Established in 1962, its roots go back as far as 1948.

[32] 2009 U.S. Army Posture Statement, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, http://www.army.mil/aps/09/information_papers/western_hemisphere_ institute.html (accessed October 26, 2009).

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